

PUBLIC COMMENTS - MAY 18, 2011 - 6:00 P.M.

STATE OF MINNESOTA

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

In the Matter of the Applications for a Route Permit and
Certificate of Need for the 115 kV Savanna Rebuild
Project

MPUC DOCKET NOS.: ET-2,E015/TL-10-1307 and
ET-2,E015/CN-10-973

Fine Lakes Township Hall
3726 Prairie Lake Road
Wright, Minnesota

MAY 18, 2011

I N D E X

WITNESS	PAGE
Nate Goode11	3
Brad Lund	6

1 (Presentations by Mr. Storm and Ms. Lommel
2 from GRE.)

3 MR. STORM: Do you have any questions for
4 me on the process? Do you have questions for the
5 applicant?

6 If you're going to speak, I ask that you
7 stand up and state and spell your name for the court
8 reporter and then make your comment or ask your
9 question, and we'll try to go as far as we can with
10 that tonight.

11 MR. NATE GOODELL: I'm Nate Goodell, the
12 last name is G-O-O-D-E-L-L. And I was just
13 wondering what the distribution underbuild -- what
14 that meant?

15 MR. STORM: I'll take a stab at it and if
16 I'm wrong, GRE. Distribution underbuild is usually,
17 if they're going to site a transmission line in an
18 area that already has a distribution line, like 32.4
19 or something, 32.5, they can put them on the same
20 structures. And that's typically referred to as
21 underbuild. Do you guys want to take that any
22 further?

23 MR. LUKKARILA: Yeah, Chuck Lukkarila,
24 Great River Energy.

25 That's correct. A lot of the system here

1 is either 25 kV or 12.47 of the distribution
2 voltages. And so if we're on the same corridor as
3 the distribution line, then we overbuild that
4 system, put those wires onto the same system. And
5 that's called underbuild.

6 MR. NATE GOODELL: So if there was two
7 sets of poles, now there would be one?

8 MS. LOMMEL: No, we'll still just have
9 one set of poles.

10 MR. LUKKARILA: The old system would be
11 removed and put on the pole.

12 MR. STORM: Everybody can't talk at the
13 same time. Remember, the court reporter has to get
14 it down. So let me just capture a little bit.

15 The benefit of underbuilding is you only
16 need one right-of-way when you've got transmission
17 and in the same area that you have distribution. It
18 allows you to put them on the same structure and it
19 reduces the amount of right-of-way. Correct me if
20 I'm wrong.

21 MS. LOMMEL: Sure, I think I know where
22 you're located, and there are two separate lines
23 that are on the same side of the road, is that your
24 area? We're not proposing that Lake Country Power
25 would do anything different with their line, so that

1 would remain as is. And then the Great River Energy
2 line would essentially replace that existing
3 transmission line that is there. And that's, again,
4 what we're proposing. But as Bill's made it very
5 clear, certainly put your public comments in or put
6 comments in regarding that if you have concerns
7 about it. And we would take a look at it certainly
8 as the utility and it's something that maybe Bill
9 would be interested in.

10 MR. STORM: So certainly for this issue
11 that you're mentioning now, in addition you may want
12 to put forth a route alternative segment to move it
13 to the north. You may also say, okay, I want you to
14 look at that, but I also want you to look at
15 underbuilding this, so if I am stuck with it I only
16 have one set of poles that's double-circuited, that
17 has the underbuild on it -- not double-circuit,
18 underbuild. So if you're going to make a comment to
19 me during scope and that's a concern, you want to
20 cover both those bases, lay that out to me, tell me
21 those are two things I want you to look at. Moving
22 it to the north and then in addition to that I want
23 you to look at underbuilding.

24 MR. NATE GOODELL: Okay.

25 MR. STORM: Okay. Any other comments?

1 MR. BRAD LUND: Brad Lund, L-U-N-D. I
2 live at 6254 Simi Road. I have 80 acres adjoining
3 the Stremel Road between 29 and Simi Road, and then
4 I have another 80 acres up by the corner of Stremel
5 and Parantala Road.

6 I guess my biggest issue is is the
7 existing line, they went through three years ago and
8 quick widened the right-of-way for the existing
9 line, now they're coming in and they've staked -- I
10 presume that the stakes they have -- it says
11 centerline, new, 20 feet from the existing; is that
12 correct?

13 MS. LOMMEL: Yes.

14 MR. BRAD LUND: So you need another
15 additional 50 feet from that line for your
16 clearance?

17 MS. LOMMEL: Yes.

18 MR. BRAD LUND: The 80 acres that I have
19 between 29 and Simi Road, 40 acres is mature timber
20 that we're going to lose, and then the next 40 to
21 the north of that, I planted 500 White Pine and the
22 first row is going to get obliterated because it's
23 45 feet from the new location on the new poles. And
24 the next row over is another 65. So when they
25 mature and branch out that's going to be -- and then

1 when you get down on that 80 acres on the corner of
2 Parantala and Stremel Road, the first 40 I don't
3 have an issue with, but the corner 40, we're going
4 to lose quite a few mature trees in that corner 40.
5 And I was wondering why they could not run the new
6 line on the east side of Stremel Road rather than on
7 the west side? I know they're concerned with cross
8 arcing, that's why they got that 20 foot, 'cause you
9 got to maintain the power and the existing line.
10 And to me there's less private property on the east
11 side of Stremel Road than there is on the west. In
12 fact, it's all private property from 29 all the way
13 down. And I was just wondering why they couldn't
14 move it to the other side of the road.

15 MR. STORM: I'll speak and then I'll give
16 Michelle an opportunity to speak. This is the
17 section where you can't de-energize the one line so
18 that's why you've got to come up next to it?

19 MR. BRAD LUND: Yes.

20 MR. STORM: If you think a solution is to
21 move across to the other side of the road and you
22 want me to evaluate that as an alternative?

23 MR. BRAD LUND: Yes.

24 MR. STORM: I need you to write me a
25 letter and say here's my property, here's my legal

1 description, he's the road I'm talking about, and
2 this is what I want you to look at. I want you to
3 look at moving this line over to the other side of
4 the road. And give me some end points.

5 And usually if there's a good bend
6 somewhere, some natural end point where they're
7 making a turn, an example is where they're coming
8 north on some road and then turning east on a road,
9 that's a nice bend point to say, okay, move that
10 down. Instead of traveling along the north side
11 here, travel on the south side here. If you can
12 write that up for me and give it to me as an
13 alternative route segment, I want you to evaluate
14 doing this for me and this is the reason I want you
15 to evaluate it, just articulate it, then I will put
16 that in my recommendations to the Commissioner and
17 we'll see where we go from there.

18 What we'll look at is we will look at
19 what are the impacts of moving that line from -- the
20 terms I'm going to use are basically terms that are
21 more used in the development of industrial property,
22 brownstone, greenstone, brown field, green field,
23 that sort of thing. So you may be asking me for --
24 just for a definition I'm going to say where the
25 existing line is a brown field, only because it's

1 already disturbed and it has a line there, and you
2 say, Bill, I want you to move it across the road.

3 Now, I don't know what is across the road
4 at this point in your particular situation, but what
5 I'll be evaluating is, okay, here's GRE's costs for
6 doing what they're planning on doing, here's the
7 costs for moving along the road, here's the
8 properties that are going to be involved, the
9 wetlands that are going to be involved, the distance
10 from houses that are going to be involved, that will
11 all be evaluated in my environmental report.

12 My environmental report will not reach a
13 conclusion, the environmental report is just to lay
14 it out. To say, okay, to the Commissioners, you
15 have the preferred route, you have the route that
16 the utility wants, and now you have these
17 alternative route segments that people have brought
18 to the table, and here are the facts surrounding all
19 of them and then the Commission will make a
20 determination. So if you submit that to me I can do
21 that, incorporate it into the scoping decision and
22 lay it out as it would be.

23 And then I don't know what side the
24 Commission will come down on it because they have to
25 weigh the competing factors, the competing factors

1 of going from an established right-of-way to making
2 a new right-of-way.

3 Now, it depends on what's on the other
4 side there. If there's homes on the other side, I
5 mean, I don't know, I'm just saying that these are
6 things that will need to be evaluated. So if
7 there's wetlands on this side that aren't on the
8 other side here, but it's just facts, I'll lay out
9 the facts for them. But that's what this process is
10 all about. Put things on the table that we can
11 evaluate and then let the Commission make their
12 determination.

13 And it doesn't just come down to money
14 and it doesn't just come down to the environment,
15 it's a lot of -- it's looking at the situation and
16 then making the best decision they can to minimize
17 the burden that someone is going to carry. And with
18 all these linear transmission projects, somebody
19 ends up carrying the burden. What we hope to gain
20 through this process is let's minimize the number of
21 people that are carrying the burden for society.
22 But I would encourage you to bring that forward to
23 me as a route alternative segment. Make sense?

24 Okay. Anybody else? Please, I've got
25 all night if you have a question.

1 MR. BRAD LUND: I guess I'm kind of
2 clouded as to -- do you want me to stand again?

3 MR. STORM: Sure.

4 MR. BRAD LUND: When it comes down to the
5 corner of -- there's an existing 230 kV Minnesota
6 Power line.

7 MS. LOMMEL: Yeah, on the north end?

8 MR. BRAD LUND: Yeah. Where does, when
9 it gets to the corner there, where is that new
10 route? Is it crossing on the corner and going on
11 the north side of Parantala Road?

12 MS. LOMMEL: Well, had I contacted you or
13 had I sent you a letter in regards to some of the
14 changes that we were looking at doing?

15 MR. BRAD LUND: I don't think so.

16 MS. LOMMEL: Okay. I know that some of
17 the owners of the property -- and maybe I can just
18 point to it on here. What we had proposed to do or
19 what we were looking at is could we go to the south
20 side of the road here. Just as you mentioned, this
21 line that cuts across is a 230 line that's owned by
22 MP, this is almost what we would call a pitch point.
23 We may have a clearance concern if we were on the
24 east side of the road at least up in this area. And
25 we don't know that yet because, of course, we have

1 to get approval for the project first. So this
2 might be a spot where I'm not certain that we could
3 be on the east side. And of course as we go further
4 south there are some homes that we know are on the
5 east side. From the utility perspective we can
6 certainly consider being on either side, but we
7 would have a couple of concerns through there.

8 MR. BRAD LUND: And this being the main
9 one?

10 MS. LOMMEL: Yeah, that 230 line. And I
11 had actually made contact with the owners of the
12 property and that's why we had talked with them
13 about being on the south side of the road here,
14 because we don't think that there's enough space.

15 MR. BRAD LUND: This is my property here
16 and I don't believe anybody has contacted me.

17 MS. LOMMEL: Okay. I think I had sent
18 out a letter to about -- are there about eight
19 people who have an interest in the property?

20 MR. BRAD LUND: Yeah.

21 MS. LOMMEL: Okay. So I had sent out a
22 letter to everybody and I had talked to people, and
23 I know Kelly was here earlier.

24 MR. BRAD LUND: Yeah.

25 MS. LOMMEL: And I know this would be a

1 little bit of a concern. That would be a new
2 corridor there.

3 MR. BRAD LUND: Yeah. And not to mention
4 is where the proposed route is here, so you'd have
5 this if you ran it on the south side and then you've
6 got this.

7 MS. LOMMEL: Right. Now this on the
8 north end, we would be able to be closer to the road
9 right-of-way so we wouldn't be so far into the
10 property. So we'd be a little closer to the road
11 there. I know the White Pines had been brought up
12 by a couple of people, they're certainly a size that
13 we could move those elsewhere on the property, get
14 them a little further back from the line, that
15 wouldn't be a problem.

16 MR. BRAD LUND: All right.

17 MS. LOMMEL: All right.

18 MR. STORM: I do want to encourage you to
19 submit alternative route segments to me. If you can
20 submit them with a map, that's great, just mail them
21 with a map with your ideas. I also would encourage
22 you to, if, as you're working these things out and
23 you're meeting with the utilities and they're
24 showing you what's open, what they're open to, and
25 you come to some kind of agreement or some

1 understanding, when we get to the public hearings
2 point, as I said, the Commission will issue a route
3 permit. When they make that decision on the route
4 permit, they will be making basically three
5 decisions. One, whether my environmental report is
6 adequate. So they have to make a decision, Bill,
7 okay, that's adequate. And they judge adequacy by
8 did I do everything I said I was going to do in my
9 scope, so it's important to get that stuff into the
10 scope. So the environmental report is adequate,
11 okay, then they'll say, okay, we're going to issue a
12 route permit and we're going to select the route.
13 But they can also put conditions in the route
14 permit. And if you work something out with the
15 utility in informal conversations, when we come time
16 to be here for the public hearing I encourage you to
17 bring them forth into the record and say, well, I
18 met with Michelle and we talked about it and this is
19 what we worked out. And I trust Michelle, she's a
20 nice person, but I'd like to elevate it to a
21 condition of the permit and that can be done.

22 Okay. Anything else? Any other
23 questions, comments?

24 Okay. Please get your scoping comments
25 to me by June 1st. You can contact me any time. If

1 you have a question or if you're having a problem or
2 if you're not feeling comfortable about something,
3 contact me. My card is on the table, my information
4 is there. I appreciate everybody coming out and
5 participating. Like I said, what we try to do is we
6 all use the energy, we're trying to build the
7 infrastructure by mitigating the burden as much as
8 we can, you know.

9 Well, thanks, I appreciate you coming
10 out.

11 (Comments concluded.)